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from L. Tolson, Jan 1917, for 1/6.

L. S. Greenhill

23134 f. 15







**NARRATIVE OF THE LOSS**  
**OF THE**  
**KENT EAST INDIAMAN,**  
**BY FIRE,**  
**IN**  
**THE BAY OF BISCAY,**  
**ON THE**  
**1st MARCH 1825.**  
**IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.**

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**BY A PASSENGER.**

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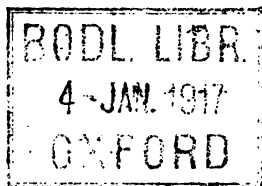
**SECOND EDITION,**  
**WITH ADDITIONS.**

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THE  
**LOSS OF THE KENT**

EAST INDIAMAN.

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MY DEAR E——,

WITH the twofold view of gratifying the lively interest excited in the minds of our friends, by the awful and afflicting calamity that has lately befallen the “ Kent ” East Indiaman, and of humbly recording the signal interposition of that God, “ who, in the midst of judgment, remembereth mercy,” I am induced to transmit to you—to be disposed of as you may think fit—the following detailed account of the melancholy event, which has at once deprived the country of many valuable lives, and thereby plunged numerous families into the deepest distress, and involved, I fear, in pecuniary ruin, or reduced to extreme embarrassment, most of the gallant survivors.



You are aware that the Kent, Captain Henry Cobb, a fine new ship of 1350 tons, bound to Bengal and China, left the Downs on the 19th February, with 20 officers, 344 soldiers, 48 women, and 66 children, belonging to the 81st regiment; with 20 private passengers, and a crew (including officers) of 148 men, on board.

The bustle attendant on a departure for India, is undoubtedly calculated to subdue the force of those deeply painful sensations to which few men can refuse to yield, in the immediate prospect of a long and distant separation from the land of their fondest and earliest recollections. With my gallant shipmates, indeed, whose elasticity of spirits is remarkably characteristic of the professions to which they belonged, hope appeared greatly to predominate over sadness. Surrounded as they were by every circumstance that could render their voyage propitious, and in the ample enjoyment of every necessary that could contribute either to their health or comfort,—their hearts seemed to beat high with contentment and gratitude towards that country which they zealously served, and whose interests they were cheerfully going forth to defend.

With a fine fresh breeze from the north-east, the stately Kent, in bearing down the Channel,

speedily passed many a well-known spot on the coast, dear to our remembrance ; and on the evening of the 23d, we took our last view of happy England, and entered the wide Atlantic, without the expectation of again seeing land until we reached the shores of India.

With slight interruptions of bad weather, we continued to make way until the night of Monday the 28th, when we were suddenly arrested in lat.  $47^{\circ} 30'$ , long.  $10^{\circ}$ , by a violent gale from the south-west, which gradually increased during the whole of the following morning.

To those who have never "gone down to the sea in ships, and seen the wonders of the Lord in the great deep," or even to such as have never been exposed in a westerly gale to the tremendous swell in the Bay of Biscay, I am sensible that the most sober description of the magnificent spectacle of "watery hills in full succession flowing," would appear sufficiently exaggerated. But it is impossible, I think, for the inexperienced mariner, however unreflecting he may try to be, to view the effects of the increasing storm, as he feels his solitary vessel reeling to and fro under his feet, without involuntarily raising his thoughts, with a secret confession of helplessness and veneration that he may never before have experienced, towards that mysteri-

ous Being, whose power, under ordinary circumstances, we may entirely disregard, and whose incessant goodness we are too prone to requite with ingratitude.

The activity of the officers and seamen of the Kent appeared to keep ample pace with that of the gale. Our larger sails were speedily taken in, or closely reefed; and about 10 o'clock on the morning of the 1st of March, after having struck our top-gallant yards, we were lying to, under a triple reefed main top-sail only, with our dead lights in, and with the whole watch of soldiers attached to the life-lines, that were run along the deck for this purpose.

The rolling of the ship, which was vastly increased by a dead weight of some hundred tons of shot and shells that formed a part of its lading, became so great about half-past eleven or twelve o'clock, that our main chains were thrown by every lurch considerably under water; and the best cleated articles of furniture in the cabins and the *cuddy*\* were dashed about with so much noise and violence, as to excite the liveliest apprehensions of individual danger.

It was a little before this period that one of

\* The Cuddy in an East Indiaman is the large cabin or dining apartment, which is on a level with the quarter deck.

the officers of the ship, with the well-meant intention of ascertaining that all was fast below, descended with two of the sailors into the hold, where they carried with them, for safety, a light in the patent lantern; and seeing that the lamp burned dimly, the officer took the precaution to hand it up to the orlop deck to be trimmed. Having afterwards discovered one of the spirit casks to be adrift, he sent the sailors for some billets of wood to secure it; but the ship in their absence having made a heavy lurch, the officer unfortunately dropped the light; and letting go his hold of the cask in his eagerness to recover the lantern, it suddenly stove, and the spirits communicating with the lamp, the whole place was instantly in a blaze.

I know not what steps were then taken. I myself had been engaged during the greater part of the morning in double lashing and otherwise securing the furniture in my cabin, and in occasionally going to the Cuddy, where the marine barometers were suspended, to mark their varying indications during the gale, in my journal; and it was on one of those occasions, after having read to Mrs. ———, at her request, the 12th chapter of St. Luke, which so beautifully declares and illustrates the minute and tender Providence of God, and so so-

lennly urges on all, the necessity of continual watchfulness and readiness for the "coming of the Son of Man," that I received from Captain Spence, the Captain of the day, the alarming information that the ship was on fire in the after-hold; on hastening to the hatchway, whence smoke was slowly ascending, I found Captain Cobb and other officers already giving orders, which seemed to be promptly obeyed by the seamen and troops, who were using every exertion, by means of the pumps, buckets of water, wet sails, hammocks, &c. to extinguish the flames.

With a view to excite amongst the ladies as little alarm as possible, in conveying this intelligence to Colonel Fearon, the commanding officer of the troops, I knocked gently at his cabin door, and expressed a wish to speak with him, but whether my countenance betrayed the state of my feelings, or the increasing noise and confusion upon deck created apprehensions amongst them that the storm was assuming a more serious aspect, I found it difficult to pacify some of the ladies by repeated assurances that no danger whatever was to be apprehended from the gale. As long as the devouring element appeared to be confined to the spot where the fire originated, and which we were

assured was surrounded on all sides by the water casks, we ventured to cherish hopes that it might be subdued ; but no sooner was the light blue vapour that at first arose succeeded by volumes of thick dingy smoke, which speedily ascending through all the four hatchways, rolled over every part of the ship, than all farther concealment became impossible, and almost all hope of preserving the vessel was abandoned. " The flames have reached the cable tier " was exclaimed by some individuals, and the strong pitchy smell that pervaded the deck confirmed the truth of the exclamation.

In these awful circumstances, Captain Cobb, with an ability and decision of character that seemed to increase with the imminence of the danger, resorted to the only alternative now left him, of ordering the lower decks to be scuttled, the combings of the hatches to be cut, and the lower ports to be opened, for the free admission of the waves.

These instructions were speedily executed by the united efforts of the troops and seamen; but not before some of the sick soldiers, one woman, and several children, unable to gain the upper deck, had perished. On descending to the gun deck with Colonel Fearon, Captain Bray, and one or two other officers of the 31st regiment,

to assist in opening the ports, I met, staggering towards the hatchway, in an exhausted and nearly senseless state, one of the mates, who informed us that he had just tumbled over the dead bodies of some individuals who must have died from suffocation, to which it was evident that he himself had almost fallen a victim. So dense and oppressive was the smoke, that it was with the utmost difficulty we could remain long enough below to fulfil Captain Cobb's wishes; which were no sooner accomplished, than the sea rushed in with extraordinary force, carrying away, in its resistless progress to the hold, the largest chests, bulk-heads, &c.

Such a sight, under any other conceivable circumstances, was well calculated to have filled us with horror; but in our natural solicitude to avoid the more immediate peril of explosion, we endeavoured to cheer each other, as we stood up to our knees in water, with a faint hope that by these violent means we might be speedily restored to safety. The immense quantity of water that was thus introduced into the hold, had indeed the effect, for a time, of checking the fury of the flames; but the danger of sinking having increased as the risk of explosion was diminished, the ship became water-logged, and presented other indications of settling, previous to her going down.

Death in two of its most awful forms now encompassed us, and we seemed left to choose the terrible alternative. But always preferring the more remote, though equally certain crisis, we tried to shut the ports again, to close the hatches, and to exclude the external air, in order if possible to prolong our existence, the near and certain termination of which appeared inevitable.

The scene of horror that now presented itself, baffles all description—

Then rose from sea to sky the wild farewell ;  
Then shriek'd the timid, and stood still the brave.

The upper deck was covered with between six and seven hundred human beings, many of whom, from previous sea-sickness, were forced on the first alarm to flee from below in a state of absolute nakedness, and were now running about in quest of husbands, children, or parents. While some were standing in silent resignation, or in stupid insensibility to their impending fate, others were yielding themselves up to the most frantic despair. Some on their knees were earnestly imploring, with significant gesticulations and in noisy supplications, the mercy of Him, whose arm, they exclaimed, was at length outstretched to smite them; others



were to be seen hastily crossing themselves, and performing the various external acts required by their peculiar persuasion, while a number of the older and more stout-hearted soldiers and sailors sullenly took their seats directly over the magazine, hoping, as they stated, that by means of the explosion which they every instant expected, a speedier termination might thereby be put to their sufferings. \* Several of the soldiers' wives and children, who had fled for temporary shelter into the after-cabins on the upper decks, were engaged in prayer and in reading the Scriptures with the ladies, some of whom were enabled, with wonderful self-possession, to offer to others those spiritual consolations, which a firm and intelligent trust in the Redeemer of the world appeared at this awful hour to impart to their own breasts. The dignified deportment of two young ladies in particular, formed a specimen of natural strength of mind, finely modified by Christian feeling, that failed not to attract the notice and admiration of every one who had an opportunity of witnessing it. On the melancholy announce-

\* Captain Cobb, with great forethought, ordered the deck to be scuttled forward, with a view to draw the fire in that direction; knowing that between it and the magazine were several tiers of water casks; while he hoped that the wet sails, &c. thrown into the after-hold, would prevent it from communicating with the spirit room abaft.

ment being made to them that all hope must be relinquished, and that death was rapidly and inevitably approaching, one of the ladies above referred to, calmly sinking down on her knees, and clasping her hands together said; "even so come, Lord Jesus," and immediately proposing to read a portion of the Scriptures to those around her; her sister with nearly equal composure and collectedness of mind selected the 46th and other appropriate Psalms, which were accordingly read, with intervals of prayer, by those ladies alternately to the assembled females.

One young gentleman, of whose promising talents and piety I dare not now make farther mention, having calmly asked me my opinion respecting the state of the ship, I told him that I thought we should be prepared to sleep that night in eternity; and I shall never forget the peculiar fervour with which he replied; as he pressed my hand in his, "my heart is filled with the peace of God;" adding, "yet though I know it is foolish, I dread exceedingly the last struggle."

Amongst the numerous objects that struck my observation at this period, I was much affected with the appearance and conduct of some of the dear children, who, quite unconscious in

the cuddy cabins, of the perils that surrounded them, continued to play as usual with their little toys in bed, or to put the most innocent and unseasonable questions to those around them. To some of the older children, who seemed fully alive to the reality of the danger, I whispered, now is the time to put in practice the instructions you used to receive at the Regimental School, and to think of that Saviour of whom you have heard so much; they replied, as the tears ran down their cheeks, "O Sir, we are trying to remember them, and we are praying to God."

The passive condition to which we were all reduced, by the total failure of our most strenuous exertions, while it was well calculated, and probably designed, to convince us afterwards, that our deliverance was effected, not "by our own might or power, but by the Spirit of the Lord," afforded us ample room at the moment for deep and awful reflection, which, it is to be earnestly wished, may have been improved, as well by those who were eventually saved, as by those who perished.

It has been observed by the author of "the Retrospect," that "in the heat of battle, it is not only possible but easy to forget death, and cease to think; but in the cool and protracted

hours of a shipwreck, where there is often nothing to engage the mind, but the recollection of tried and unsuccessful labours, and the sight of unavoidable and increasing harbingers of destruction, it is not easy or possible to forget ourselves or a future state."

The general applicability of the latter part of this proposition, I am disposed to doubt; for if I were to judge of the feelings of all on board, by those of the number who were heard to express them, I should apprehend that a large majority of those men, whose previous attention has never been fairly and fully directed to the great subject of religion, approach the gates of death, it may be, with solemnity, or with terror, but without any definable or tangible conviction of the fact, that "after death cometh the judgment."

Several there were, indeed, who vowed in loud and piteous cries, that if the Lord God would spare their lives, they would thenceforward dedicate all their powers to his service; and not a few were heard to exclaim, in the bitterness of remorse, that the judgments of the Most High were justly poured out upon them, for their neglected Sabbaths, and their profligate or profane lives; but the number of those was extremely small, who appeared to dwell

either with lively hope or dread on the view of an opening eternity. And as a farther evidence of the truth of this observation, I may mention, that when I afterwards had occasion to mount the mizen shrouds, I there met with a young man, who had brought me a letter of introduction from our excellent friend Dr. G—n, to whom I felt it my duty, while we were rocking on the mast, quietly to propose the great question, “What must we do to be saved?” and this young gentleman has since informed Mr. P. that though he was at that moment fully persuaded of the certainty of immediate death, yet the subject of eternity, in any form, had not once flashed upon his mind, previously to my conversation.

While we thus lay in a state of physical inaction, but with all our mental faculties in rapid and painful activity,—with the waves lashing furiously against the side of our devoted ship, as if in anger with the hostile element for not more speedily performing its office of destruction,—the binnacle, by one of those many lurches which were driving every thing moveable from side to side of the vessel, was suddenly wrenched from its fastenings, and all the apparatus of the compass dashed to pieces upon the deck; on which one of the young mates,

emphatically regarding it for a moment, cried out with the emotion so natural to a sailor under such circumstances, "What! is the Kent's compass really gone?" leaving the bystanders to form, from that omen, their own conclusions. One promising young officer of the troops was seen thoughtfully removing from his writing-case a lock of hair, which he composedly deposited in his bosom; and another officer procuring paper, &c. addressed a short communication to his father, which was afterwards carefully enclosed in a bottle, in the hope that it might eventually reach its destination, with the view, as he stated, of relieving him from the long years of fruitless anxiety and suspense which our melancholy fate would awaken, and of bearing his humble testimony, at a moment when his sincerity could scarcely be questioned, to the faithfulness of that God in whose mercy he trusted, and whose peace he largely enjoyed in the tremendous prospect of immediate dissolution.

It was at this appalling instant, when "all hope that we should be saved was now taken away," and when the letter referred to was about being committed to the waves, that it occurred to Mr. Thomson, the fourth mate, to send a man to the fore-top, rather with the ardent wish, than the expectation,

that some friendly sail might be discovered on the face of the waters. The sailor, on mounting, threw his eyes round the horizon for a moment,—a moment of unutterable suspense,—and waving his hat, exclaimed, “a sail on the lee bow!” The joyful announcement was received with deep-felt thanksgivings, and with three cheers upon deck. Our flags of distress were instantly hoisted, and our minute guns fired; and we endeavoured to bear down under our three top-sails and fore-sail upon the stranger, which afterwards proved to be the *Cambria*, a small brig of 200 tons burden—Cook—bound to Vera Cruz, having on board twenty or thirty Cornish miners, and other agents of the Anglo-Mexican Company.

For ten or fifteen minutes we were left in doubt whether the brig perceived our signals, or perceiving them, was either disposed or able to lend us any assistance. From the violence of the gale, it seems that the report of our guns was not heard; but the ascending volumes of smoke from the ship, sufficiently announced the dreadful nature of our distress; and we had the satisfaction, after a short period of dark suspense, to see the brig hoist British colours, and crowd all sail to hasten to our relief.

Although it was impossible, and would have been improper, to repress the rising hopes that were pretty generally diffused amongst us by the unexpected sight of the Cambria, yet I confess, that when I reflected on the long period our ship had been already burning—on the tremendous sea that was running—on the extreme smallness of the brig, and the immense number of human beings to be saved,—I could only venture to hope that a few might be spared; but I durst not for a moment contemplate the possibility of my own preservation.

While Captain Cobb, Colonel Fearon, and Major Macgregor of the 31st regiment, were consulting together, as the brig was approaching us, on the necessary preparations for getting out the boats, &c. one of the officers asked Major M. in what order it was intended the officers should move off; to which the other replied, "Of course in funeral order;" which injunction was instantly confirmed by Colonel Fearon, who said, "Most undoubtedly the juniors first—but see that any man is cut down who presumes to enter the boats before the means of escape are presented to the women and children."

To prevent the rush to the boats, as they were being lowered, which, from certain symp-



toms of impatience manifested both by soldiers and sailors, there was reason to fear; some of the military officers were stationed over them with drawn swords. But from the firm determination which these exhibited, and the great subordination observed, with few exceptions, by the troops, this proper precaution was afterwards rendered unnecessary.

Arrangements having been considerably made by Captain Cobb for placing in the first boat, previous to letting it down, all the ladies, and as many of the soldiers' wives as it could safely contain, they hurriedly wrapt themselves up in whatever articles of clothing could be most conveniently found; and I think about two, or half-past two, o'clock, a most mournful procession advanced from the after-cabins to the starboard cuddy port, outside of which the cutter was suspended. Scarcely a word was uttered—not a scream was heard—even the infants ceased to cry, as if conscious of the unspoken and unspeakable anguish that was at that instant rending the hearts of their parting parents—nor was the silence of voices in any way broken, except in one or two cases, where the ladies plaintively entreated permission to be left behind with their husbands. But on being assured that every moment's delay might occasion the sacrifice of a

human life, they successively suffered themselves to be torn from the tender embrace, and with the fortitude which never fails to characterise and adorn their sex on occasions of overwhelming trial, were placed, without a murmur, in the boat, which was immediately lowered into a sea so tempestuous, as to leave us only "to hope against hope" that it should live in it for a single moment. Twice the cry was heard from those on the chains that the boat was swamping. But He who enabled the Apostle Peter to walk on the face of the deep, and was graciously attending to the silent but earnest aspirations of those on board, had decreed its safety.

Although Captain Cobb had used every precaution to diminish the danger of the boat's descent, and for this purpose stationed a man with an axe to cut away the tackle from either extremity, should the slightest difficulty occur in unhooking it; yet the peril attending the whole operation, which can only be adequately estimated by nautical men, had very nearly proved fatal to its numerous inmates.

After one or two unsuccessful attempts to place the little frail bark fairly upon the surface of the water, the command was at length given to unhook; the tackle at the stern was, in consequence, immediately cleared; but the

ropes at the bow having got foul, the sailor there found it impossible to obey the order. In vain was the axe applied to the entangled tackle, the moment was inconceivably critical, as the boat, which necessarily followed the motion of the ship, was gradually rising out of the water, and must, in another instant, have been hanging perpendicularly by the bow, and its helpless passengers launched into the deep, had not a most providential wave suddenly struck and lifted up the stern, so as to enable the seamen to disengage the tackle; and the boat, being dexterously cleared from the ship, was seen, after a little while, from the poop, battling with the billows;—now raised, in its progress to the brig, like a speck on their summit, and then disappearing for several seconds, as if engulfed “in the horrid vale” between them.\* The Cambria having prudently lain to at some distance from the Kent, lest she should be involved in her explosion, or exposed to the fire from our guns, which, being all

\* I was afterwards informed by one of the passengers on board the Cambria,—for from the great height of the Indianan, we had not the opportunity of making a similar observation,—that when both vessels happened to be at the same time in the trough of the sea, the Kent was entirely concealed by the intervening waves from the deck of the Cambria,

shotted, afterwards went off as the flames successively reached them, the men had a considerable way to row ; and the success of this first experiment seeming to be the measure of our future hopes, the movements of this precious boat—incalculably precious, without doubt, to the agonized husbands and fathers immediately connected with it,—were watched with intense anxiety by all on board. The better to balance the boat in the raging sea through which it had to pass, and to enable the seamen to ply their oars, the women and children were stowed promiscuously under the seats ; and consequently exposed to the risk of being drowned by the continual dashing of the spray over their heads, which so filled the boat during the passage, that before their arrival at the brig, the poor females were sitting up to the breast in water, and their children kept with the greatest difficulty above it.

However, in the course of twenty minutes, or half an hour, the little cutter was soon alongside the “ark of refuge;” and the first human being that happened to be re-admitted, out of the vast assemblage that ultimately found shelter there, was the infant son of Major Macgregor, a child of only a few weeks, who was caught from his mother’s arms and lifted

into the brig by Mr. Thomson, the fourth mate of the Kent, the officer who had been ordered to take charge of the ladies' boat.

But the extreme difficulty and danger presented to the women and children in getting into the Cambria seemed scarcely less imminent than that which they had previously encountered ; for, to prevent the boat from swamping or being stove against the side of the brig, while its passengers were disembarking from it, required no ordinary exercise of skill and perseverance on the part of the sailors, nor of self-possession and effort on that of the females themselves. On coming alongside the Cambria, Captain Cook very judiciously called out first for the children, who were successively thrown or handed up from the boat. The women were then urged to avail themselves of every favourable heave of the sea by springing towards the many friendly arms that were extended from the vessel to receive them ; and, notwithstanding the deplorable consequence of making a false step under such critical circumstances, not a single accident occurred to any individual belonging to this first boat. Indeed, the only one whose life appears to have been placed in extreme jeopardy alongside, was one of the ladies, who, in attempting

to spring from the boat, came short of the hand that was held out to her, and would certainly have perished, had she not most happily caught hold at the instant of a rope that happened to be hanging over the Cambria's side, to which she clung for some moments, until she was dragged into the vessel.

I have reason to know, that the feelings of oppression, delight, gratitude and praise experienced by the married officers and soldiers, on being assured of the comparative safety of their wives and children, so entirely abstracted their minds from their own situation, as to render them for a little while afterwards totally insensible either to the storm that beat upon them, or to the active and gathering volcano that threatened every instant to explode under their feet.

It being impossible for the boats, after the first trip, to come alongside the Kent, a plan was adopted for lowering the women and children by ropes from the stern, by tying them two and two together. But from the heaving of the ship, and the extreme difficulty in dropping them at the instant the boat was underneath, many of the poor creatures were unavoidably plunged repeatedly under water; and much as humanity may rejoice that no woman

was eventually lost by this process, yet it was as impossible to prevent, as it was deplorable to witness, the great sacrifice it occasioned of the younger children,—the same violent means which only reduced the parents to a state of exhaustion or insensibility, having entirely extinguished the vital spark in the feebler frames of the infants that were fastened to them.

Amid the conflicting feelings and dispositions manifested by the numerous actors in this melancholy drama, many affecting proofs were elicited of parental and filial affection, or of disinterested friendship, that seemed to shed a momentary halo around the gloomy scene.

Two or three soldiers, to relieve their wives of a part of their families, sprang into the water with their children, and perished in their endeavours to save them. One young lady, who had resolutely refused to quit her father, whose sense of duty kept him at his post, was near falling a sacrifice to her filial devotion, not having been picked up by those in the boats until she had sunk five or six times. Another individual, who was reduced to the frightful alternative of losing his wife or his children, hastily decided in favour of his duty to the former. His wife was accordingly saved, but his

four children, alas ! were left to perish. A fine fellow, a soldier, who had neither wife nor child of his own, but who evinced the greatest solicitude for the safety of those of others, insisted on having three children lashed to him, with whom he plunged into the water ; not being able to reach the boat, he was again drawn into the ship with his charge, but not before two of the children had expired. One man fell down the hatchway into the flames, and another had his back so completely broken as to have been observed quite doubled falling overboard. These numerous spectacles of individual loss and suffering were not confined to the entrance upon the perilous voyage between the two ships. One man, who fell between the boat and the brig, had his head literally crushed to pieces ; and some others were lost in their attempts to ascend the sides of the Cambria.

Seeing that the tardy means employed for the escape of the women and children, necessarily consumed a great deal of time that might be partly devoted to the general preservation, orders were given that along with the females, each of the boats should also admit a certain portion of the soldiers ; several of whom, in their impatience to take advantage of this per-



mission, flung themselves overboard, and sunk in their ill-judged and premature efforts for deliverance.

One poor fellow of this number, a very respectable man, had actually reached the boat, and was raising his hand to lay hold on the gunnel, when the bow of the boat, by a sudden pitch, struck him on the head, and he instantly went down. There was a peculiarity attending this man's case that deserves notice. His wife, to whom he was warmly attached, not having been of the allotted number of women to accompany the regiment abroad, resolved, in her anxiety to follow her husband, to defeat this arrangement, and accordingly repaired with the detachment to Gravesend, where she ingeniously managed, by eluding the vigilance of the sentries, to get on board, and conceal herself for several days ; and although she was discovered, and sent ashore at Deal, she contrived a second time, with true feminine perseverance, to get between decks, where she continued to secrete herself until the morning of the fatal disaster.

While the men were thus bent in various ways on self-preservation, one of the sailors, who had taken his post with many others over the magazine, awaiting with great patience the

dreaded explosion, at last cried out, as if in ill humour that his expectation was likely to be disappointed, "Well! if she won't blow up, I'll see if I can't get away from her:" and instantly jumping up, he made the best of his way to one of the boats, which I understand he reached in safety.

I ought to state, that three out of the six boats we originally possessed, were either completely stove or swamped in the course of the day, one of them with men in it, some of whom were seen floating in the water for a moment before they disappeared; and it is suspected that one or two of those who went down, must have sunk under the weight of their spoils, the same individuals having been seen eagerly plundering the cuddy cabins.

As the day was rapidly drawing to a close, and the flames were slowly, but perceptibly extending, Colonel Fearon and Captain Cobb evinced an increasing anxiety to relieve the remainder of the gallant men under their charge.

To facilitate this object, a rope was suspended from the extremity of the spanker boom, along which the men were recommended to proceed, and thence slide down by the rope into the boats. But as, from the great swell of the sea,

and the constant heaving of the ship, it was impossible for the boats to preserve their station for a moment; those who adopted this course incurred so great a risk of swinging for some time in the air, and of being repeatedly plunged under water, or dashed against the sides of the boats underneath, that many of the landsmen continued to throw themselves out of the stern windows on the upper deck, preferring what appeared to me the more precarious chance of reaching the boats by swimming. Rafts made of spars, hencoops, &c. were also ordered to be constructed, for the twofold purpose of forming an intermediate communication with the boats,—a purpose, by the bye, which they very imperfectly answered,—and of serving as a last point of retreat, should the farther extension of the flames compel us to desert the vessel altogether: directions were at the same time given that every man should tie a rope round his waist, by which he might afterwards attach himself to the rafts, should he be suddenly forced to take to the water. While the people were busily occupied in adopting this recommendation, I was surprised, I had almost said amused, by the singular delicacy of one of the Irish recruits, who, in searching for a rope in one of

the cabins, called out to me that he could find none except the cordage belonging to an officer's cot, and wished to know whether there would be any harm in his appropriating it to his own use.

The gradual removal of the officers was at the same time commenced, and was marked by a discipline the most rigid, and an intrepidity the most exemplary: none appearing to be influenced by a vain and ostentatious bravery, which, in cases of extreme peril, affords rather a presumptive proof of secret timidity than of fortitude; nor any betraying an unmanly or unsoldierlike impatience to quit the ship; but with the becoming deportment of men neither paralysed by, nor profanely insensible to, the accumulating dangers that encompassed them, they progressively departed in the different boats with their soldiers;—they who happened to proceed first, leaving behind them an example of coolness, that could not be unprofitable to those who followed.

But the finest illustration of their conduct, was displayed in that of their chief, whose ability and invincible presence of mind, under the complicated responsibility and anxiety of a commander, husband, and father, were eminently calculated, throughout this dismal day, to in-

spire all others with composure and fortitude. Never for a moment did Colonel Fearon seem to forget the authority with which his Sovereign had invested him, nor did any of his officers—as far as my observation went—cease to remember the relative situations in which they were severally placed. Even in the gloomiest moments of that dark season, when the dissolution of every earthly distinction seemed near at hand, the decision and confidence with which orders were issued on the one hand, and the promptitude and respect with which they were obeyed on the other, afford the best proofs of the stability of the well-connected system of discipline established in the 31st regiment, and the most unquestionable ground for the high and flattering commendation which His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief has been pleased to bestow upon it.

I should, however, be guilty of injustice and unkindness, if I here omitted to bear my humble testimony to the manly behaviour of the East India Company's cadets, and other private passengers on board, who emulated the best conduct of the officers of the ship and of the troops, and equally participated with them in all the hardships and exertions of the day.

As an agreeable proof too, of the subordina-

tion and good feeling that governed the poor soldiers in the midst of their sufferings, I ought to state, that towards evening, when the melancholy groupes who were passively seated on the poop, exhausted by previous fatigue, anxiety, and fasting, were beginning to experience the pain of intolerable thirst, a box of oranges was accidentally discovered by some of the men, who with a degree of mingled consideration, respect, and affection, that could hardly have been expected at such a moment, refused to partake of the grateful beverage until they had offered a share of it to their officers.

I regret that the circumstances under which I write, do not allow me sufficient time for recalling to my recollection all the busy thoughts that engaged my own mind on that eventful day, or the various conjectures which I ventured to form of what was passing in the minds of others.

But one idea, I remember, was forcibly suggested to me,—that instead of being able to trace, amongst my numerous associates, that diversity of fortitude which I should have expected, *a priori*, would mark their conduct,—forming, as it were, a descending series, from the decided heroism exhibited by some, down to the lowest degree of pusillanimity and frenzy,

discoverable in others,--I remarked that the mental condition of my fellow sufferers was rather divided by a broad, but as it afterwards appeared, not impassable line; on the one side of which were ranged all whose minds were greatly elevated by the excitement above their ordinary standard; and on the other was to be seen the incalculably smaller, but more conspicuous groupe, whose powers of acting and thinking became absolutely paralysed, or were driven into delirium, by the unusual character and pressure of the danger.

Nor was it uninteresting to observe the curious interchange, at least externally, of strength and weakness that obtained between those two discordant parties, during the day. Some, whose agitation and timidity had, in the earlier part of it, rendered them objects of pity or contempt, afterwards rose, by some great internal effort, into positive distinction for the opposite qualities; while others, remarkable at first for calmness and courage, suddenly giving way, without any fresh cause of despair, seemed afterwards to cast their minds as they did their bodies, prostrate before the danger.

It was not difficult, perhaps, to account for these apparent anomalies; but I shall content myself with simply stating the facts, adding to

them one of a similar description that sensibly affected my own mind.

Some of the soldiers near me having casually remarked that the sun was setting, I looked round, and never can I forget the intensity with which I regarded his declining rays. I had previously felt deeply impressed with the conviction that that night the ocean was to be my bed; and had, I imagined, sufficiently realized to my mind, both the last struggles and the consequences of death. But as I continued solemnly watching the departing beams of the sun, the thought that that was really the very last I should ever behold, gradually expanded into reflections, the most tremendous in their import.—It was not, I am persuaded, either the retrospect of a most unprofitable life, or the direct fear of death or of judgment that occupied my mind at the period I allude to; but a broad, illimitable view of eternity itself, altogether abstracted from the misery or felicity that flows through it,—a sort of painless, pleasureless, sleepless eternity. I know not whether the overwhelming thought would have hurried me, had I not speedily seized, as with the grasp of death, on some of those sweet promises of the gospel, which give to an immortal existence its only charms; and that naturally enough led



back my thoughts, by means of the brilliant object before me, to the contemplation of that "blessed city, which hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it; for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

I have been the more particular in recording my precise feelings at the period in question, because they tend to confirm an opinion which I have long entertained,—in common, I believe, with yourself and others,—that we very rarely realize even those objects that seem, in our every day speculations, to be the most interesting to our hearts. We are so much in the habit of uttering the awful words—Almighty, heaven, hell, eternity, divine justice, holiness, &c. without attaching to them, in all their magnitude, the ideas of which such words are the symbols, that we become overwhelmed with much of the astonishment that accompanies a new and alarming discovery, if, at any time, the ideas themselves are suddenly and forcibly impressed upon us; and it is probably this vagueness of conception, experienced even by those whose minds are not altogether unexercised on the subject of religion, that enables others, devoid of all reflection whatever, to stand on the very brink of that precipice which divides the world of

time from the regions of eternity, not only with apparent, but frequently, I am persuaded, with real tranquillity. How much is it to be lamented, that we do not keep in mind a truth which no one can pretend to dispute, that our indifference or blindness to danger, whether it be temporal or eternal, cannot possibly remove or diminish the extent of it.

Some time after the shades of night had enveloped us, I descended to the cuddy, in quest of a blanket to shelter me from the increasing cold; and the scene of desolation that there presented itself was melancholy in the extreme. The place which, only a few short hours before, had been the seat of kindly intercourse, and of social gaiety, was now entirely deserted, save by a few miserable wretches, who were either stretched in irrecoverable intoxication on the floor, or prowling about like beasts of prey, in search of plunder. The sofas, drawers, and other articles of furniture, the due arrangement of which had cost so much thought and pains, were now broken into a thousand pieces, and scattered in confusion around me. Some of the geese and other poultry, escaped from their confinement, were cackling in the cuddy; while a solitary pig, wandering from its sty in the fore-castle, was ranging at large in undisturbed possession of

the Brussels carpet that covered one of the cabins. Glad to retire from a scene so cheerless and affecting, and rendered more dismal by the smoke which was oozing up from below, I returned to the poop, where I again found amongst the few officers that remained, Captain Cobb, Colonel Fearon, Lieutenants Ruxton, Booth, and Evans, superintending with unabated zeal, the removal of the rapidly diminishing sufferers, as the boats successively arrived for their conveyance.

The alarm and impatience of the people increased in a high ratio as the night advanced; and our fears, amid the surrounding darkness, were fed as much by the groundless or exaggerated reports of the timid, as by the real and evident approach of the fatal crisis itself. With the view to insure a greater probability of being discovered by those in the boats, some of the more collected and hardy soldiers (for I think almost all the sailors had already effected their escape) took the precaution to tie towels and such like articles round their heads, previously to their committing themselves to the water.

As the boats were nearly three quarters of an hour absent between each trip, which period was necessarily spent by those in the

wreck in a state of fearful inactivity,—abundant opportunity was afforded for collecting the sentiments of many of the unhappy men around me; some of whom, after remaining perhaps for a while in silent abstraction, would suddenly burst forth, as if awakened from some terrible dream to a still more frightful reality, into a long train of loud and desponding lamentation, that gradually subsided into its former stillness.

It was during those trying intervals of rest, that religious instruction and consolation appeared to be the most required, and the most acceptable. Some there were, accordingly, who endeavoured to dispense it agreeably to the visible wants and feelings of the earnest hearers. On one of those occasions, especially, the officer to whom I have already alluded, was entreated to pray. His prayer was short, but was frequently broken by the exclamations of assent to some of its confessions, that were wrung from the afflicted hearts of his honest auditors.

I know not in what manner, under those circumstances, spiritual hope or comfort could have been ministered to my afflicted companions, by those who regard works, either wholly or partly, as the means of propitiating

Divine Justice, rather than the evidence and fruits of that faith which pacifies the conscience and purifies the heart. But in some few cases, at least, where the individuals deplored the want of time for repentance and good works, I well remember that no arguments tended to sooth their troubled minds, but those which went directly to assure them of the freeness and fulness of that grace which is not refused, even in the eleventh hour, to the very chief of sinners. And if any of those to whom I now allude, have been spared to read this record of their feelings in the prospect of death; it will be well for them to keep solemnly in mind the vows they then took upon them, and to seek to improve that season of probation which they so earnestly besought, and which has been so mercifully extended to them,—by humbly and incessantly applying for accessions of that faith which they are sensible removed the terrors of their awakened consciences, and can alone enable them henceforward to live in a sober, righteous, and godly manner,—and thereby give the only unquestionable proof of their love to God, and their interest in the great salvation of his Son Jesus Christ.

If, on reading this imperfect narrative, any persons beyond the immediate circle of my com-

panions in misery (for within it I can safely declare that there were no indications of ridicule) should affect to despise, as contemptible or unsoldierlike, the humble devotional exercises to which I have now referred, I should like to assure them, that, although they were undoubtedly commenced and prosecuted, much more with an eternal than a temporal object in view, yet they also subserved the important purpose of restoring order and composure amongst a certain limited class of the soldiers, at moments when mere military appeals had ceased to operate with their wonted influence.

I must state, that *in general*, it was not those most remarkable for their fortitude who evinced either a precipitancy to depart, or a desire to remain very long behind—the older and cooler soldiers appearing to possess too much regard for their officers, as well as for their individual credit, to take their hasty departure at a very early period of the day, and too much wisdom and resolution to hesitate to the very last.

But it was not till the close of this mournful tragedy that backwardness, rather than impatience, to adopt the perilous and only means of escape that offered, became generally discernible on the part of the unhappy remnant still on

board;—and that made it not only imperative on Captain Cobb to reiterate his threats, as well as his entreaties, that not an instant should be lost, but seemed to render it expedient for one of the officers of the troops, who had expressed his intention of remaining to the last, to limit, in the hearing of those around him, the period of his own stay. Seeing however, between nine and ten o'clock, that some individuals were consuming the precious moments, by obstinately hesitating to proceed, while others were making the inadmissible request to be lowered down as the women had been; learning from the boatmen that the wreck, which was already nine or ten feet below the ordinary water mark, had sunk two feet lower since their last trip; and calculating, besides, that the two boats then under the stern, with that which was in sight on its return from the brig, would suffice for the conveyance of all who seemed in a condition to remove; the three remaining officers of the 31st regiment seriously prepared to take their departure.

As I cannot perhaps convey to you so correct an idea of the condition of others as by describing my own feelings and situation under the same circumstances, I shall make no apology for detailing the manner of my indi-

vidual escape, which will sufficiently mark that of many hundreds that preceded it.

The spanker boom of so large a ship as the Kent, which projects, I should think, 16 or 18 feet over the stern, rests on ordinary occasions about 19 or 20 feet above the water; but in the position in which we were placed, from the great height of the sea, and consequent pitching of the ship, it was frequently lifted to a height of not less than 30 or 40 feet from the surface.

To reach the rope, therefore, that hung from its extremity, was an operation that seemed to require the aid of as much dexterity of hand as steadiness of head. For it was not only the nervousness of creeping along the boom itself, or the extreme difficulty of afterwards seizing on, and sliding down by the rope, that we had to dread, and that had occasioned the loss of some valuable lives, by deterring the men from adopting this mode of escape; but as the boat, which the one moment was probably close under the boom, might be carried the next, by the force of the waves, 15 or 20 yards away from it, the unhappy individual, whose best calculations were thus defeated, was generally left swinging for some time in mid-air, if he was not repeatedly plunged several feet un-



der water, or dashed with dangerous violence against the sides of the returning boat,—or what not unfrequently happened, was forced to let go his hold of the rope altogether. As there seemed, however, no alternative, I did not hesitate, notwithstanding my comparative inexperience and awkwardness in such a situation, to throw my leg across the perilous stick; and with a heart extremely grateful that such means of deliverance, dangerous as they appeared, were still extended to me; and more grateful still that I had been enabled, in common with others, to discharge my honest duty to my sovereign and to my fellow soldiers; I proceeded, after confidently committing my spirit, the great object of my solicitude, into the keeping of Him who had formed and redeemed it, to creep slowly forward, feeling at every step the increasing difficulty of my situation. On getting nearly to the end of the boom, the young officer whom I followed and myself were met with a squall of wind and rain, so violent as to make us fain to embrace closely the slippery stick, without attempting for some minutes to make any progress, and to excite our apprehension that we must relinquish all hope of reaching the rope. But our fears were disappointed: and after resting

for a while at the boom end, while my companion was descending to the boat, which he did not find until he had been plunged once or twice over head in the water, I prepared to follow; and instead of lowering myself, as many had imprudently done, at the moment when the boat was inclining toward us,—and consequently being unable to descend the whole distance before it again receded,—I calculated that while the boat was retiring I ought to commence my descent, which would probably be completed by the time the returning wave brought it underneath; by which means I was, I believe, almost the only officer or soldier who reached the boat without being either severely bruised or immersed in the water. But my friend Colonel Fearon had not been so fortunate: for after swinging for some time, and being repeatedly struck against the side of the boat, and at one time drawn completely under it, he was at last so utterly exhausted, that he must instantly have let go his hold of the rope and perished, had not some one in the boat seized him by the hair of the head and dragged him into it, almost senseless and alarmingly bruised.

Captain Cobb, in his immoveable resolution to be the last if possible to quit his ship, and in

his generous anxiety for the preservation of every life entrusted to his charge, refused to seek the boat, until he again endeavoured to urge onward the few still around him, who seemed struck dumb and powerless with dismay.\* But finding all his entreaties fruitless, and hearing the guns, whose tackle was burst asunder by the advancing flames, successively exploding in the hold into which they had fallen,—this gallant officer, after having nobly pursued, for the preservation of others, a course of exertion that has been rarely equalled either in its duration or difficulty, at last felt it right to provide for his own safety, by laying hold on the topping-lift, or rope that connects the driver boom with the mizen-top, and thereby getting over the heads of the infatuated men who occupied the boom, unable to go either backward or forward, and ultimately dropping himself into the water.

\* Some of those men who were necessarily left behind, having previously conducted themselves with great propriety and courage, I think it but justice to express my belief, that the same difficulties which had nearly proved fatal to Captain Cobb's personal escape, were probably found to be insurmountable by landmen, whose coolness, unaccompanied with dexterity and experience, might not be available to them in their awful situation.

The means of escape, however, did not cease to be presented to the unfortunate individuals above referred to, long after Captain Cobb took his departure,—since one of the boats persevered in keeping its station under the Kent's stern, not only after all expostulation and entreaty with those on board had failed, but until the flames, bursting forth from the cabin windows, rendered it impossible to remain, without inflicting the greatest cruelty upon the individuals that manned it. But even on the return of the boat in question to the Cambria, with the single soldier who availed himself of it, did Captain Cook, with characteristic jealousy, refuse to allow it to come alongside, until he learned that it was commanded by the spirited young officer, Mr. Thomson,\* whose indefatigable exertions during the whole day, were to him a sufficient proof, that all had been done that could be done for the deliverance of those individuals. But the same beneficent Providence which had been so wonderfully exerted for the preservation of hundreds, was pleased, by a still more striking and unquestionable display of power and goodness, to avert the fate of a portion of

\* I ought to state that the exertions of Mr. Muir, 3d mate, were also most conspicuous during the whole day.

those few who, we had all too much reason to fear, were doomed to destruction.

It would appear, for the poor men themselves give an extremely confused, though I am persuaded not a wilfully false, account of themselves, that shortly after the departure of the last boat, they were driven by the flames to seek shelter on the chains, where they stood until the masts fell overboard, to which they then clung for some hours, in a state of horror that no language can describe; until they were most providentially, I may say miraculously, discovered and picked up, by the humane master (Bibbey) of the *Caroline*, a vessel on its passage from Egypt to Liverpool, who happened to see the explosion at a great distance, and instantly made all sail in the direction whence it proceeded. Along with the fourteen men thus miraculously preserved were three others, who had expired before the arrival of the *Caroline* for their rescue.\*

The men on their return to their regiment expressed themselves in terms of the liveliest gratitude for the affectionate attentions they received on board the *Caroline*, from Captain Bibbey, who considerably remained till day-

\* See the Appendix.

light close to the wreck, in the hope that some others might still be found clinging to it;—an act of humanity which, it will appear on the slightest reflection, would have been madness in Captain Cook, in the peculiar situation of the *Cambria*, to have attempted.

In reference to this last most melancholy portion of my narrative, I feel it extremely painful to be obliged to hazard an opinion, that if the whole crew of the *Kent* had put forth, from the beginning, the same generous and seamanlike efforts which several of them undoubtedly did, the few soldiers who were thus left behind would most probably have been safely disposed of before the advance of the flames or their own terror had incapacitated them, in the manner I have endeavoured to describe, from effecting their escape. But if, apart from this grievous consideration, I only recollect the lamentable state of exhaustion to which that portion of the crew were reduced, who unshrinkingly performed to the last their arduous and perilous duties,—and that out of the three boats that remained afloat, one was only prevented from sinking towards the close of the night, by having the hole in its bottom repeatedly stuffed with soldiers' jackets; while the other two were rendered inefficient, the one

by having its bow completely stove, and the second by being half filled with water, and the thwarts so torn as to make it necessary to lash the oars to the boat's ribs,—I must believe that, independently of the counteracting circumstances formerly mentioned, all was done that humanity could possibly demand, or intrepidity effect, for the preservation of every individual.

Quitting, for a moment, the subject of the wreck, I would advert to what was in the mean time taking place on board the *Cambria*. I cannot, however, pretend to give you any adequate idea of the feelings of hope or despair, that alternately flowed, like a tide, in the breasts of the unhappy females on board the brig, during the many hours of torturing suspense in which several of them were unavoidably held, respecting the fate of their husbands;—feelings which were inconceivably excited, rather than soothed, by the idle and erroneous rumours occasionally conveyed to them, regarding the state of the *Kent*. But still less can I attempt to portray the alternate pictures of awful joy, and of wild distraction, exhibited by the sufferers, (for both parties for the moment seemed equally to suffer,) as the terrible truth was communicated, that they and their children

were indeed left husbandless and fatherless ; or as the objects from whom they had feared they were for ever severed, suddenly rushed into their arms.

But these feelings of delight, whatever may have been their intensity, were speedily chastened, and the attention of all arrested, by the last tremendous spectacle of destruction.

After the arrival of the last boat, the flames, which had spread along the upper deck and poop, ascended with the rapidity of lightning to the masts and rigging, forming one general conflagration, that illumined the heavens to an immense distance, and was strongly reflected upon several objects on board the brig. The flags of distress, hoisted in the morning were seen for a considerable time waving amid the flames, until the masts to which they were suspended successively fell, like stately steeples, over the ship's side. At last, about half-past one o'clock in the morning, the devouring element having communicated to the magazine, the long threatened explosion was seen, and the blazing fragments of the once magnificent Kent were instantly hurried, like so many rockets, high into the air ; leaving, in the comparative darkness that succeeded, the



deathful scene of that disastrous day floating before the mind like some feverish dream.\*

Shortly afterwards the brig, which had been gradually making sail, was running at the rate of nine or ten miles an hour towards the nearest port. I would here endeavour to render my humble tribute of admiration and gratitude to that gallant and excellent individual who, under God, was undoubtedly the chief instrument of our deliverance; if I were not sensible that testimony has been already borne to his heroic and humane efforts, in a manner much more commensurate with, and from quarters reflecting infinitely greater honour upon his merits, than the feeble expressions of them which I should be able to record. I shall therefore content myself with appending to this letter some of the gratifying testimonials to which I refer. But I trust you will keep in mind, that Captain Cook's generous intentions and exertions must have proved utterly unavailing for the preservation of so many lives, had they not been most nobly and unremittingly supported by those of his mate and crew, as well as of the numerous passengers on board

\* The brig was about three miles distant from the Kent at the period of its explosion.

his brig. While the former, only eight in number, were usefully and necessarily employed in working the vessel, the sturdy Cornish miners and Yorkshire smelters, on the approach of the different boats, took their perilous station upon the chains, where they put forth the great muscular strength with which heaven had endowed them, in dexterously seizing, at each successive heave of the sea, on some of the exhausted people and dragging them upon deck. Nor did their kind anxieties terminate there. They, and the gentlemen connected with them, cheerfully opened their ample stores of clothes and provisions, which they liberally dispensed to the naked and famished sufferers;—they surrendered their beds to the helpless women and children, and seemed, in short, during the whole of our passage to England, to take no other delight than in ministering to all our wants.

Although, after the first burst of mutual gratulation, and of becoming acknowledgment of the Divine mercy, on account of our unlooked for deliverance, had subsided, none of us felt disposed to much interchange of thought, each being rather inclined to wrap himself up in his own reflections; yet we did not, during this first night, view with the

alarm it warranted, the extreme misery and danger to which we were still exposed, by being crowded together, in a gale of wind, with upwards of 600 human beings in a small brig of 200 tons, at a distance, too, of several hundred miles from any accessible port. Our little cabin, which was only calculated, under ordinary circumstances, for the accommodation of eight or ten persons, was now made to contain nearly eighty individuals, many of whom had no sitting room, and even some of the ladies no room to lie down. Owing to the continued violence of the gale, and to the bulwarks on one side of the brig having been driven in, the sea beat so incessantly over our deck, as to render it necessary that the hatches should only be lifted up between the returning waves, to prevent absolute suffocation below, where the men were so closely packed together, that the steam arising from their respiration excited at one time an apprehension that the vessel was on fire; while the impurity of the air they were inhaling became so marked, that the lights occasionally carried down amongst them were almost instantly extinguished. Nor was the condition of the hundreds who covered the deck, less wretched than that of their comrades below; since they were obliged night

and day to stand shivering, in their wet and nearly naked state, ankle-deep in water;\*—some of the older children and females were thrown into fits, while the infants were pitifully crying for that nourishment which their nursing mothers were no longer able to give them.†

Our only hope, amid these great and accumulating miseries was, that the same compassionate Providence which had already so marvellously interposed on our behalf, would not permit the wind to abate or change, until we reached some friendly port; for we were all convinced that a delay of a very few days longer at sea, must inevitably involve us in famine, pestilence, and a complication of the most dreadful evils. Our hopes were not disappointed. The gale continued with even increasing violence; and our able Captain,

\* In addition to those who were naked on board the Kent at the moment the alarm of fire was heard, several individuals afterwards threw off their clothes to enable them the more easily to swim to the boats.

† One of the soldiers' wives was delivered of a child, about an hour or two after her arrival on board the brig.—Both she and the child, who has since received the appropriate name of Cambria, are doing well.

crowding all sail at the risk of carrying away his masts, so nobly urged his vessel onward, that in the afternoon of Thursday the 3d, the delightful exclamation from aloft was heard, "Land a-head!" In the evening we descried the Scilly lights; and running rapidly along the Cornish coast, we joyfully cast anchor in Falmouth harbour, about half-past 12 o'clock on the following morning.\*

On reviewing the various proximate causes to which so many human beings owed their deliverance from a combination of dangers, as remarkable for their duration, as they were appalling in their aspect, it is impossible, I think, not to discover and gratefully acknowledge, in the beneficence of their arrangement, the overruling providence of that blessed Being, who is sometimes pleased, in his mysterious operations, to produce the same effects from causes apparently different; and on the other hand, as in our own case, to bring forth results the most opposite, from one and the same cause. For there is no doubt that the heavy rolling of our ship, occasioned by the violent gale, which was the real origin of all our disasters, contributed also most essentially to our subsequent

\* i. e. half an hour after midnight.

preservation; since, had not Captain Cobb been enabled, by the greatness of the swell, to introduce speedily through the gun ports the immense quantity of water that inundated the hold; and thereby checked for so long a time the fury of the flames, the Kent must unquestionably have been consumed, before many, perhaps before any of those on board could have found shelter in the Cambria.

But it is unnecessary to dwell on an insulated fact like this, amidst a concatenation of circumstances, all leading to the same conclusion, and so closely bound together as to force us to confess, that if a single link in the chain had been withdrawn or withheld, we must all most probably have perished.

The Cambria, which had been, it seems, unaccountably detained in port nearly a month, after the period assigned for her departure, was, early on the morning of the fatal calamity, pursuing at a great distance ahead of us, the same course with ourselves; but her bulwarks on the weather side having been suddenly driven in, by a heavy sea breaking over her quarter, Captain Cook, in his anxiety to give ease to his labouring vessel, was induced to go completely out of his course, by throwing the brig on the opposite tack, by which means

alone he was brought in sight of us. Not to dwell on the unexpected, but not unimportant facts, of the flames having been mercifully prevented, for eleven hours, from either communicating with the magazine forward,\* or the great spirit room abaft, or even coming into contact with the tiller ropes,—any of which circumstances would evidently have blasted all our hopes,—I would remark, that until the Cambria hove in sight, we had not discovered any vessel whatever for several days previous; nor did we afterwards see another until we entered the chops of the Channel. It is to be remembered too, that had the Cambria, with her small crew, been homeward instead of outward bound, her scanty remainder of provisions, under such circumstances, would hardly have sufficed to form a single meal for our vast assemblage; or if, instead of having her lower deck completely clear, she had been carrying out a full cargo, there would not have been time, under the pressure of the danger and the violence of the gale, to throw the cargo overboard, and certainly, with it, not sufficient space in the brig to contain one half of our number.

\* The magazines in many of the Indianies, contrary, I believe, to the practice in ships of war, is under the fore-castle.

When I reflect, besides, on the disastrous consequences that must have followed, if, during our passage home, which was performed in a period most unusually short, the wind had either veered round a few points, or even partially subsided, which must have produced a scene of horror on board, more terrible if possible than that from which we had escaped;—and above all, when I recollect the extraordinary fact, and that which seems to have the most forcibly struck the whole of us, that we had not been above an hour in Falmouth harbour, when the wind, which had all along been blowing from the south-west, suddenly chopped round to the opposite quarter of the compass, and continued uninterruptedly for several days afterwards to blow strongly from the north-east;—one cannot help concluding, that he who sees nothing of a Divine Providence in our preservation, must be lamentably and wilfully blind “to the majesty of the Lord.”

As little time as possible was lost, after our arrival at Falmouth, in reporting to Colonel Fenwick, the Lieutenant-Governor of Penderennis Castle, the deplorable circumstances under which we had returned to port, and the urgent necessity there existed for our instant removal ashore; and with the tender sympathy which character-



ises that old and distinguished officer, did he hasten, long before daylight, to take steps for the disembarkation and comfort of the troops and sailors. Captain King, R. N., to whose kind anxieties and active exertions we had also much reason to feel indebted, as soon as our condition was communicated to him, called into immediate requisition the numerous boats at his disposal ; and, in the course of the morning, we all prepared, with thankful and joyful hearts, to replace our feet on the shores of old England.

The ladies, always destined to form our vanguard, were the first to disembark, and were met on the beach by immense crowds of the inhabitants, who appeared to have been attracted thither less by idle curiosity, than from the sincerest desire to alleviate in every possible manner their manifest sufferings.

The sailors and soldiers, cold, wet, and almost naked, quickly followed ; the whole forming, in their haggard looks, and the endless variety of their costume, an assemblage at once as melancholy and grotesque as it is possible to conceive. So eager did the people appear to be to pour out upon us the full current of their sympathies, that shoes, hats, and other articles of urgent necessity, were presented to several

of the officers and men, before they had even quitted the point of disembarkation. And in the course of the day, many of the officers and soldiers, and almost all the females, were partaking, in the private houses of individuals, of the most liberal and needful hospitality.

But this flow of compassion and kindness did not cease with the impulse of the more immediate occasion that had called it forth. For a meeting of the inhabitants was afterwards held; where subscriptions in clothes and money to a large amount, were collected for the relief of numerous sufferers. The women and children, whose wants seemed to demand their first care, were speedily furnished with comfortable clothing, and the poor widows and orphans with decent mourning. Depositories of shirts, shoes, stockings, &c. were formed for the supply of the officers and private passengers; and the sick and wounded\* in the hospital, were made the recipients, not only of all those kindly attentions, and medical assistance, that could remove or sooth their temporal suffering, but were also invited to partake freely of the most judicious

\* Many of the officers and men were severely bruised, in the course of their exertions on board the Kent, or in endeavouring to effect their escape.

spiritual consolation and instruction. This uninterrupted march of charity was conducted by the ladies of Falmouth, who were zealously accompanied in it, by the whole body, in the vicinity, of that peculiar sect of Christians, who have ever been as remarkable for their unassuming pretensions and consistent conduct, as for unostentatiously standing in the front ranks of every good work. And so strong is the reason which I, in particular, have to associate in my mind, all that is sincere, considerate, and charitable, with the Society of Friends, that the very badge of Quakerism will, I trust, henceforward prove a sufficient passport to the best feelings of my heart.

On the first Sunday after our arrival, Colonel Fearon, followed by all his officers and men, and accompanied by Captain Cobb, and the officers and private passengers of his late ship, hastened to prostrate themselves before the throne of heavenly grace, to pour out the public expression of their thanksgiving to their Almighty Preserver. The scene was deeply impressive; and it is earnestly to be hoped, that many a poor fellow who listened, perhaps for the first time in his life with unquestionable sincerity and humility to the voice of instruction, will be found steadily prosecuting, in

the strength of God, the good resolutions that he may on that solemn occasion have formed, until he be able to say, as one of the greatest generals of antiquity did, "that it was good for him to have been afflicted, for before he was afflicted, he went astray, but that afterwards he was not ashamed to keep God's word."

In the course of a few days, the private passengers and most of the sailors of our party, were dispersed in various directions: such of the crew of the Kent as had not, by their previously inhumane and insubordinate conduct, forfeited all claim to the slightest indulgence, having received from the proverbial liberality of Captain Cobb, a sufficient sum to bear their expenses to their respective homes. And the troops, after having incurred to the excellent inhabitants of Falmouth and the adjacent towns, a debt of gratitude which none of them can ever hope to repay, were embarked on the 18th for Chatham, where they are at present enjoying, through the kind consideration and sympathy of His Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief, that degree of relaxation and quiet, of which they seem so much to stand in need, previously to their proceeding to their ulterior destination.

I think you must be already sensible that the circumstances of our situation on board the Kent, did not enable us conscientiously to save a single article, either of public or private property, from the flames; indeed, the only thing I preserved—with the exception of forty or fifty sovereigns, which I hastily tied up in my pocket handkerchief, and put into my wife's hands, at the moment she was lifted into the boat, as a provision for herself and her companions, against the temporary want to which they might be exposed on some foreign shore—was the pocket-compass which you yourself presented to me.

But I would have you to be assured, that the total abandonment of individual interests on the part of the officers of the ship, and of the 81st regiment, was occasioned by no want of self-possession, nor, even in all cases, of opportunities to attend to them; but to a sincere desire to avoid even the appearance of selfishness, at moments when the valuable lives of their sailors and soldiers were at stake—and this observation applies with still greater force to the senior officers in both services, whose cabins being upon the upper deck were accessible during the whole day—and where many portable articles of value were deposited, which

could have been easily carried off, had those officers been disposed to devote to their own concerns even a portion of that precious time, and of those active exertions which they unremittingly applied to the performance of their professional duty.

Notwithstanding the unexpected length to which I have already extended this little narrative, I cannot allow myself to close it without offering to my late companions on board the Kent, into whose hands it may possibly fall, should you see meet to publish it, a few very plain and simple observations, which I think worthy of their serious consideration, and the importance of which I desire to have deeply impressed upon my own mind. None of those soldiers who are in the habit of reading their Bibles can have failed to notice that faith in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is therein made the great pivot on which the salvation of man hinges; that the whole human race, without distinction of rank, nation, age, or sex, being justly exposed to the wrath of Almighty God, nothing but the precious blood of Christ which was shed on the cross can possibly atone for their sins; and that faith in this atonement can alone pacify the conscience, and awaken confidence towards God as a reconciled Fa-

ther. If, therefore, "He that believeth in Christ shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned," be the unequivocal language of Jehovah, either expressly declared, or obviously implied in every page of that record which he has vouchsafed to us of his Son; is it not a question of the deepest concernment to every one professing any regard for divine revelation, whether he really understands and believes that record, or whether he is able to give, not only to others but to himself, a reason of this hope that is in him?

From the influence of education or example, the absence of serious reflection, an attention to the outward ordinances of religion, a regard to many of the proprieties and decencies of life, and a forgetfulness that the religion of the Bible is a religion of motives rather than one of observances,—minds easily satisfied on such subjects may persuade themselves that they are spiritually alive while they are dead,—that they are amongst the sincere disciples of the blessed Redeemer, and fully interested in his salvation, while they may have neither part nor lot in the matter. But if, at the hour of death, when all external support shall slide away, the soul should be awakened to the consciousness of its real condition; if it should be made to

see, on the one hand, the spirituality and exceeding breadth of the divine law, and be quickened, on the other, to a sense of its unnumbered transgressions; if the mercy of God out of Christ, in which so many vainly and vaguely trust, should become obscured by the inflexible justice and spotless holiness of his character; and if the solitary spirit, as it is dragged towards the mysterious precipice, is made to hear, from a voice which it can no longer mistake, "Cursed is every one who continued not in all things that are written in the law to do them,"—how unspeakably miserable must be the condition of the man who thus discovers, for the first time, that the sand which he had all his lifetime been mistaking for the "Rock of ages," is now giving way under his feet, and that his soul must speedily sink into that state where "the tree for ever lieth as it falleth;" where "he that is unjust must be unjust still, he that is unholy, unholy still;" and where there is "no work, nor device, nor knowledge," not repentance.

But that I may not be misunderstood, or be supposed to favour principles of barren speculation, more delusive and dangerous to their possessors, and to the best interests of society, than absolute ignorance itself,—I would remind



the gallant men to whom I am now more especially addressing myself, that "that faith which saves the soul," not only "worketh" invariably "by love," and gradually "overcometh the world," but that "it is the gift of God," implanted in the heart by his Holy Spirit, even by that Spirit which is freely given to every one that earnestly asketh. And however unable the simple soldier may be to explain either the nature or the manner of its operation, he must not deceive himself into the persuasion that he is possessed of this precious grace, unless he feels it bringing forth in his life and conversation the abundant fruits that necessarily spring from it, and that cannot indeed be produced without it. He will be zealous and steady in the performance of duty, patient under fatigue and privation, sober amid temptations, calm but firm in the hour of danger, and respectfully obedient to his officers; he will honour his king, be content with his wages, and do harm to no man. His piety will be ardent but sober; his prayers will be earnest and frequent, but rather in secret than before men; he will not be contentious or disputatious, but rather desirous of instructing others by his example than by his precepts; making his light so to shine before them, in the simplicity of his

motives, the uprightness of his actions, in his readiness to oblige; and by the whole tenor of his life, that they seeing his good works, may be led, by the Divine blessing, to acknowledge the reality and power and beauty of religion, and be induced in like manner to glorify his heavenly Father. In short; in comparison with his thoughtless comrades, he must not only aspire to become a better man, but from the constraining motives of the Gospel, struggle to be also in every essential respect a better soldier.

In conclusion, I would observe, that if any class of men, more than another, ought to be struck with awe and gratitude by the goodness and providence of God, it is they who go down to the sea in ships, and see his wonders in the great deep; or if any ought to familiarise their minds with death, and its solemn consequences, it is surely soldiers; "whose very business it is to die." May all those then, especially, who lately possessed the privilege, but rarely granted, of being allowed, in the full vigour of health, and in the absence of all the bustle and excitement of battle, to contemplate, from the very brink of eternity, the awful realities that reign within it, as many of their departing comrades were hurried through its dreaded portals, be now led, in the respite which has been

THE  
FUTURE

## APPENDIX.

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[THE following narrative records the proceedings on board the **CAROLINE**, Captain **BIBBY**, relative to the preservation of fourteen men who were left on the wreck of the **KENT** East Indiaman. The details are exceedingly interesting, and may be relied upon as authentic. The scenes here described took place *after* the departure of the **CAMBRIA** from the burning remains of the **KENT**.]

ABOUT twelve o'clock at night on the 1st of March last, a bright light was observed in the horizon by the watch of the bark **Caroline** on her passage from Alexandria to Liverpool, proceeding apparently from a ship on fire. It having blown strong the preceding day, the **Caroline** was at the time under double reefed main and fore-top sails, main trysail, and fore-top-mast staysail, close upon a wind with a heavy sea going. Word was immediately passed to Captain **Bibby**, who instantly bore up, and setting his main-top gallant sail ran down towards the spot.

About two o'clock, when every eye was intensely fixed upon the increasing brightness in the sky, a sudden jet of vivid light darted upwards, evidently caused by an explosion, though they were as yet too far distant to hear any report.

In half an hour the *Caroline* had approached sufficiently near to make out the wreck of a large vessel lying head to wind, of which nothing remained but the ribs and frame timbers, which, marking the outlines of a double line of ports and quarter-galleries, afforded too much reason to fear that the burning skeleton was the remnant of a first class East Indian or line-of-battle ship. The flames, however, had so completely consumed every other external feature, that nothing could be ascertained with accuracy. She was burnt nearly to the water's edge; but becoming gradually lighter as the internal timbers and fallen decks and spars were consumed, she still floated, pitching majestically as she rose and fell over the long rolling swell of the bay. Her appearance was that of an immense cauldron or cage of buoyant basket-work, formed of the charred and blackened ribs, naked and stripped of every plank, encircling an uninterrupted mass of flame, not however of uniform intensity, as from two or three points, probably where the hatchways had supplied an additional quantity of looser fuel, brighter emissions were hursting upwards. Above, and far to leeward, the atmosphere was a cloud of curling smoke, the whole sprinkled with myriads of sparks and burning flakes of lighter materials, thrown up without intermission, and scattered by the wind over the sky and waves.

As the *Caroline* bore down, part of a mast and some spars were observed rising and falling, and almost grinding under the starboard, or what might be called, the weather-quarter of the wreck; for although, as has been stated, it rode nearly head to wind, in the course of drifting, these spars being fast to the after-part, in some degree gave the stern-frame a slight cant to windward.

The *Caroline* coming down right before the wind was, in a few minutes, brought across the bows of the wreck, and as near as was consistent with safety. At that moment, when, to all appearance, no human being could be supposed to retain life within the sphere of such a conflagration, a shout was

heard, and almost at the same instant several figures were observed clinging to the above-mentioned mast and spars. From their low situation, almost upon a level with the water, and the rapidity of the bark's motion, she could not have been visible long before they hailed, what then must have been their feelings, when (no rational hope of rescue remaining), they suddenly beheld, within a few yards the hull and sails of a large vessel, brilliantly illuminated by the glasses, but whatever those feelings were, a fearful pause ensued, for, with equal rapidity gliding astward the bows of the Kent, the stranger disappeared, leaving them to their own conjectures as to the possibility of being saved, even if the attempt were made, in consequence of the heavy sea, and probable disappearance of the wreck before a boat could reach them.

Captain Bibby saw the hazard, and with excellent judgment immediately decided upon his plan of operation. The top-gallant-sail was taken in, the fore-topmast stay-sail lowered, and the ship's gaitree continued under the topsails and try-sail to leeward, at such a distance as to avoid the danger of falling flakes and sparks; but, at the same time, so near as to admit of rendering every possible assistance to the forlorn sufferers, and then the fore-top-sail was braced aback, and the vessel heaved to. This course to leeward was further determined upon, in the hope that if any boat or raft was hanging near the wreck, it might be cast off and steered towards the Carolina; it being obvious that in such a sea it would be impossible for rafts or spars, or even boats, if much overloaded or imperfectly manned, to make their way to windward. In the mean time, the jolly boat was lowered down from the stern, and manned by Mr. Matthew Weller, the mate, and four seamen, who pushed off without hesitation, and pulled for the wreck. It is almost unnecessary to add, that in their progress these gallant fellows were exposed to very considerable danger, for, situated as they were to leeward, the sea in every direction was covered with articles of every description and

size. Masts, spars, chests, packages, furniture, &c. were dashing about, now in the hollow and trough of the sea, now on the summit of high waves, threatening destruction to whatever they might come in contact with, but fearlessly and skilfully they persevered, and, having approached within a few yards of the stern, they caught sight of the first living being—a man was observed writhing as he clung to a rope or portion of wreck close under the ship's counter—so close, indeed; that, as the stern frame rose with the swell, he was jerked upwards, and suspended above the water, to meet a more dreadful fate, for, with few and short intervals, streams of pure flame gushed forth through the casings of the gun-room ports, and scorched the poor sufferer, whose cries of agony they could distinctly hear, and which only ceased when, as the surge passed on the descending stern frame, plunging downwards buried him in the waves. Imminently dangerous, not to say hopeless, as was the chance of saving this man, alternately exposed to the horrors of the contending elements, Mr. Wallen made up his mind to run every risk, and accordingly the men pushed at once under the stern frame, without attending to their own safety, exposed as they were to the danger of these successive jets of flame. "He," said Mr. Wallen, "appeared to be the worst off, and therefore the first it was our business to look after." The gratification of rescuing a fellow-creature from such an unparalleled situation of suffering was, however, withheld; for when almost within their grasp, when the poor fellow (if faculties and sense then remained, which may be doubted, for latterly he had been silent) looked for preservation, the fire severed the rope or spar connecting him with the wreck—he sunk, and was seen no more. Their efforts were then directed to the men on the mast, from which, in a few minutes, by cautiously backing in their boat, six of the nearest were secured and carried off, but not without considerable difficulty, as the swell rendered all approach extremely hazardous.

To have taken more would have risked the safety of the whole, for it may be easily conceived that in a small merchantman's jolly boat, about eighteen feet in length, and, in many respects, inferior to the generality of boats of this description, eleven persons in a heavy sea, and under such circumstances, were even more than it was consistent with strict prudence to carry, and, in fact, when returning, they were warned, by a heavy wave which nearly swamped them, of the consequence of overloading so small a conveyance. The first trip occupied a space of about half an hour; and no sooner were the six passengers disposed of than Mr. Wallen again shoved off for the wreck, from which the *Caroline* by drifting had now increased her distance. No survivors having been observed on other parts, or near the vessel, those on the mast under the weather-quarter became the exclusive objects of attention, and accordingly, as before, the boat was backed in, and with equal success—six more were taken on board.

During this second trip, Mr. Wallen had remarked, from the state of the remaining works above water, that in all probability, before he could make a third attempt, the mass would go down, in which case there was too much reason to fear, that the survivors on the mast must be sucked under by the vortex, and inevitably lost. Exertions were, therefore, redoubled; and although, as has been stated, the distance between the vessels had materially increased, the second trip did not occupy more time than the first, and no sooner had the additional six been placed in safety, than, for the third and last time, the little jolly boat pushed off. But when struggling against the head sea, before they could reach the mast, the anticipated and dreaded event took place. The fiery pile was observed to settle slowly on the waves, and gradually disappear. In another instant, the hitherto bright and burning atmosphere was involved in utter darkness, rendered still more awful by the contrast; a dense cloud of black smoke lingered like a shroud over the spot, and to the loud crackling of burn-



ing timbers and rustling of flames a death-like silence had succeeded.

With a presence of mind well fitted for the service he was upon, Mr. Wallen, as the last flash quivered upon the water, set the spot by a star—aware, but for this precaution, his remaining exertions might yet be vain; for even with the bright light, not inferior to that of mid-day, his approaches to the wreck had been attended with considerable danger; but now, involved in darkness, these dangers were increased an hundred fold; floating pieces of wreck could no longer be seen and avoided, and a single blow would have annihilated his frail boat. As a last and only chance of rescuing such as might possibly be still floating, he resolved to wait for daylight—but to keep up their spirits, and show that they were not deserted, loud and repeated shouts were raised from the boat. For a time none were returned, and they despaired of being further useful; but at last a feeble cry reached their ears, and then again the boat's crew cheered loudly and gladly. For an anxious hour, during which they hung upon their oars, or occasionally moved to keep their position, with his eye steadily fixed upon the friendly guiding star, Mr. Wallen remained in suspense.

At length the dawn began to break, and the mist again became visible in the very line in which its bearings had been taken, and four forms were still seen amongst the cordage and hop work; but they were motionless, and it was doubtful whether life remained. On nearing them, however, anxiety was in part relieved, for two of the four showed symptoms of animation—they raised their heads, looked up, and stretched their arms towards their deliverers, who, pulling up, again backed their boat upon the wreck, and succeeded in securing them, though in a state of almost perfect exhaustion, from the length of time they had been exposed to the waves, with which they had been every moment nearly overwhelmed; but the other two made no sign; one had attached himself

firmly to the spar, and grasping it in his arms, rested his head upon it as if asleep. The other, reared between the cheeks of the mast, stood half upright with his arms extended, and his face turned towards the direction of the boat, but he was motionless—both were dead—and, of course, no efforts were made to detach their bodies from the wreck. On Mr. Wallen's return, one of the Indiaman's boats was observed drifting at a short distance, and as it was possible that some survivors might be in it, they pulled along-side, but found it empty. This boat was, however, taken in tow, with the hope of being secured on board the *Caroline*, but it soon became necessary to cut her away, for as the dawn advanced, the windward sky assumed a stormy aspect; the wind, which had during the night been comparatively moderate, though strong, began to blow in gusts, and the long swells, instead of rolling on in one unbroken mass, began to curl upon their summits, and break in feathery sprays—sure indications of approaching mischief. Not a moment was therefore to be lost, and, true to the lowering signs of the morning, before the jolly boat could be well secured, the wind had freshened considerably, and all hands were engaged in preparing for an expected gale. In fact, had the boat been half an hour later, there is every reason to suppose that she could not have regained the vessel. How long these fourteen survivors had been floating on the mast, cannot be ascertained with certainty, for their account is confused and imperfect; but it is known by the letter of Mr. Thomson, published in the newspapers, that the cutter, under his command, did not quit the *Kent* till after midnight,\* when it was considered impossible to remain longer in consequence of the flames from the gun-room, ports, and cabin-windows. At that time the spanker boom was crowded with soldiers, whose perilous situation was, notwithstanding, in-

\* About which time the fire had been observed by the *Caroline*, and when, in fact, she was bearing down towards the *Kent*.

sufficient to overcome their fears of leaping from that height into the water. The masts and greater part of the rigging remained standing, when the Cambria quitted the wreck, and the decks were not finally deserted until their heat became excessive, and the fire began to burst forth from stem to stern with overwhelming fierceness, and a general rush then took place towards the masts, spars, and such parts of the rigging as offered the slightest prospect of temporary safety. The work of destruction must, however, have gone on from that period most rapidly; and as the lower extremities of the masts and bowsprit must soon have been consumed, they probably all fell about the same time; but dreadful as was the situation of those who still clung to the spanker boom and mast, which seem to have been entangled together, the fate of those on the other spars cannot be contemplated without the keenest feelings of horror and commiseration. It is conjectured that some rope (as the floating mast on which the survivors were found rounded the stern, and was brought up under the star-board quarter) must have got foul of the keel or rudder iron, thus attaching it to the hull of the vessel, whereas other spars falling clear, drifted bodily away. In their fall, no doubt, those who clung to them must have been washed off; but it is equally probable that many must also have regained them, and, drifting to leeward, could have been at no great distance, when the Caroline, running down towards them, suddenly luffed up and hove to under the lee of the Kent. Every prospect of preservation being thus annihilated, we can only hope that, in such a state of utter despair, the sufferings of these wretched beings were not long protracted.

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The humanity and meritorious efforts of Captain Bibby and Mr. Wallen are above all praise, and well deserve to be extensively known.

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LIST OF THE NUMBER LOST IN THE DESTRUCTION  
OF THE KENT.

	Men.	Women.	Children.
31st Regiment	54	1	20
Seamen .	1	—	5 Marine Boys.
Total .	55	1	25=81 individuals.

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LETTER FROM CAPTAIN COOK TO HIS AGENTS.

*Brig Cambria, Falmouth, March 4, 1825.*

Messrs. Wm. Broad & Sons Agents to Lloyd's.

GENTLEMEN,

You are aware of my leaving this port on the 24th ult. with passengers and goods for Mexico, and I beg to acquaint you of my return here this morning, at 1 A. M. under the following circumstances :—

On Tuesday last, the 1st instant, being then in latitude 47° 30', and longitude 9° 45', laying to with a strong gale from the westward, under a close-reefed main top-sail, we discovered a large sail to the westward, and on approaching found her to have a signal of distress flying, which induced me immediately to render every assistance in my power, and on nearing, found her to be on fire. About 3 P. M. being then on her bow, we succeeded in getting the first boat from the vessel, which proved to be the Honourable Company's ship Kent, Captain Cobb, of 1400 tons, for Bengal and China, with troops and passengers, amounting, with the crew, to 637 souls. From 3 to 8 P. M. the boats were constantly employed in bringing the people to the Cambria, and succeeded in saving 301 off-

cers, non-commissioned ditto, and privates, of the 31st regiment, 46 women, and 48 children appertaining to ditto, 19 male and female private passengers, and Captain Cobb, and 139 of the crew, amounting in all to 554. The flames now becoming exceedingly fierce, I could not urge the sailors again to return to the ship, nor deem it at all prudent, for the preservation of the lives already on board my vessel, to remain longer near the Kent, expecting her instantly to blow up. By accounts since made up, it is supposed that 64 soldiers, 1 woman, 21 children, and 4 of the crew, were left when Captain Cobb quitted the vessel, whose conduct during the trying occasion is beyond my humble praise, displaying the greatest coolness and intrepidity; and by his exertions, and those of Colonel Fearon, the commander of the troops, who were the last to quit, the women, children, and passengers were got into the boats, and they did not leave themselves, until their influence to induce any more to go into them was useless. At 2 A. M. the Kent blew up, after being completely enveloped in flames for four hours previous.—The fire originated in the after-hold, where spirits were stowed for the use of the troops, a cask of which breaking adrift and bursting, the contents unfortunately ignited by a candle in a lantern.

I feel the greatest gratification in stating that the gentlemen and their Cornish sailors, in all 36, with my own crew, 11 more, behaved throughout the trying period with the greatest kindness, in getting the people from the boats, soothing their sufferings, giving up their own clothes and beds to the women and children, volunteering to go into the boats, (which I had good reason to prevent,) and leaving nothing undone to make them as comfortable as the limited size of my brig would allow, (only 200 tons.) It would be pleasing also could I speak as highly of the crew of the Kent; but I cannot refrain from expressing my great disappointment of their conduct, (in which I am borne out by Captain Cobb,) derogatory in every respect to the generally received character of a British seaman, by

refusing to return to the Kent for the people after the first trip, and requiring my utmost exertions and determination to compel them to renew their endeavours to get out the soldiers, passengers, and the remainder of their own shipmates who were left behind ; and it was only by using coercive measures, in conjunction with my own crew and passengers, and telling them I would not receive them on board unless they did so, that they proceeded, though reluctantly, in their duty. I must, however, except the officers, particularly Mr. Thomson, fourth mate, and Mr. Phillips, the boatswain, whose conduct and behaviour, in every respect, justifies my warmest praise.

It may not be amiss to state, that two hours after the ship blew up, a soldier's wife was delivered of a fine boy on board the Cambria, and both mother and child are doing well.

I remain,  
Gentlemen,  
Your most obedient Servant,  
(Signed) W. COOK.

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LETTER FROM THE OFFICERS OF THE 31ST REGIMENT AND PRIVATE PASSENGERS TO CAPTAIN COBB.

*Falmouth, March 6, 1825.*

DEAR SIR,

WE the undersigned officers of the 31st regiment, and private passengers on board the Honourable East India Company's late ship Kent, under your command, deeply impressed by the signal interposition of Divine Providence in rescuing our persons from the two destructive elements to which so many of our shipmates have lately fallen victims, cannot sepa-

rate to proceed to our respective destinations, without performing an act, dictated rather by palpable justice than by partial friendship, in recording some expression of our lively gratitude to you, Sir, as a powerful instrument employed by Almighty God, for the preservation not only of our own lives, but of those of our beloved families, and of the gallant men with whom many of us stand so closely associated.

From the moment that the alarming announcement of fire was given, you remained steadily at your post, directing the efforts of those around you with a degree of self-possession and ability, which equally contributed to animate their exertions, and to extend the means of escape to the numerous human beings committed to your charge.

If those qualities, so conspicuous in your conduct during the whole period of our awful suspense, were observed to change their complexion, from moment to moment, it was by their assuming a loftier and nobler character as the imminence of our danger increased; and amid the vain counsel of some, and the noisy and conflicting suggestions of many on board, we could not but admire how calmly but promptly you improved every opportunity of preserving your ship, which the varying circumstances of our situation presented; how humanely and affectionately you lent your personal aid and valuable counsel in early removing from the scene of destruction, the numerous helpless women and children belonging to the troops; and how obstinately you adhered to your vessel until every individual, whom despair did not incapacitate from attempting their escape, had quitted it.

If our sense of gratitude to you for these signal services did not absorb for the present every other feeling, we should derive unfeigned pleasure from dwelling largely on our obligations to you for your unobtrusive but substantial kindness to us during our stay on board, as well as for your considerate and liberal attention to the wants and conveniences of even the humblest individual placed under your protection.

Whether, therefore, you return immediately to professional employment, or retire for a time to private life, you must rest assured that you carry along with you the sincerest good wishes, and the liveliest gratitude of,

Dear Sir,

Your very faithful friends and servants,

(Signed by the Military Officers and private passengers.)

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CAPTAIN COBB'S REPLY.

*Albany, London, March 8, 1825.*

MY DEAR SIR,

THE kind and by far too flattering letter, put into my hands at the moment I was leaving Falmouth, by Captain Sir Charles Farrington, demands my instant and grateful acknowledgements. Although I should be wanting in good feeling indeed, did I not fully appreciate the approbation of such friends, who in the moment of severe trial, stood forward so manfully to meet it, I have not the vanity to think otherwise than that personal friendship, and being mutual fellow-sufferers, your feelings have led you very much to over-rate my endeavours to do my duty. A lively and thankful recollection of the support and assistance I received from you all on that occasion, I shall ever cherish with the best feelings of my heart, and carry with me to the grave. I ardently and sincerely hope there is some good in store to recompense you in some measure for past misfortunes, and in that earnest hope let me subscribe myself,

Your obliged friend,

H. COBB.

To Colonel Fearon, &c.



**LETTER FROM THE OFFICERS OF THE 31st REGIMENT, OFFICERS OF THE KENT, AND PASSENGERS, TO CAPTAIN COOK.**

SIR,

It is with feelings to which no language can do justice, that we, the undersigned officers of the 31st regiment, and private passengers on board, and officers belonging to the Honourable the East India Company's late ship Kent, attempt the gratifying duty of pouring out the inadequate, indeed, but unfeigned expressions of our liveliest gratitude, for the signal, the immeasurable obligation we owe you, as the willing instrument employed by the Father of Mercies, for the preservation from destruction, of hundreds of lives, invaluable to their families, and not uninteresting, we trust, to their country.

At a time when the awful dispensation, with which it pleased an adorable but mysterious Providence to visit our ship, had assumed an aspect so appalling and hopeless, as to exclude from the most sanguine minds every prospect of deliverance; and when even the most audacious and unreflecting amongst us were compelled to read, as distinctly, in the signs around them, as if it were written with a sun-beam, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee,"—that God, "who in the midst of judgment remembereth mercy," had designed your bark as an ark of refuge for us, and had commissioned you, Sir, to the high and honourable duty of opening the door to take us in.

At the present moment especially, when our minds are peculiarly humbled and affected by the unmerited goodness of Him, "whose wonders we have so recently seen in the great

deep ;" and while we are lamenting the premature and sudden bereavement of so many gallant men, bound to most of us by ties which sailors and soldiers can only fully appreciate, it would ill become us, by conferring undue commendation upon a fellow mortal, to rob our heavenly Deliverer of any portion of the praise and the glory that belong to him alone ; but, in our solicitude to cherish a permanent sense of devout gratitude to the fountain of all good, we persuade ourselves that we are permitted at the same time to express our honest admission of your conduct, as the channel by which this goodness has been made to flow upon us ;—for whether we reflect on the promptitude with which you bore down to us, in answer to our signal of distress, or on the skill and heroism you displayed in effecting our deliverance ; forgetting, with a noble disinterestedness, the peril in which you thereby involved your own vessel ; whether we remember the extraordinary perseverance and anxiety with which you watched and adhered to our burning ship, until the last ray of hope seemed to be quenched in the darkness that succeeded its explosion, or whether we dwell on the humanity and hospitality we experienced during our sojourn with you, or on the ability and decision with which you steered us, under the most critical circumstances, into a most friendly port ; we cannot help regarding you as eminently possessed of the numerous qualities that adorn and characterise a British seaman.

Fully sensible, however, that no temporal remuneration can liquidate the debt we have incurred to you, we shall not vainly presume to estimate it by any pecuniary compensation ; but we trust you will allow us the gratification of presenting you with a piece of plate commemorative of an event that will henceforward enable you to lay your head upon your pillow, with the sweet consciousness of having performed a brilliant achievement, that has brought unmixed joy into the bosom of many a grateful family.

We cannot take leave of you, Sir, without expressing our

sincere acknowledgments to Mr. Conolly, your mate, in particular, and to your crew generally, who so eagerly and indefatigably supported your efforts; and we trust that Mr. Conolly will accept of the trifling mark of our gratitude which will accompany that designed for yourself.

To Messrs. Lucas and Parker, and to the other gentlemen on board your vessel, we beg you will convey our warmest thanks for their individual benevolence and unweariedness in administering to all our wants; and we should be guilty of a most unpardonable omission if we refrained from confessing how deeply we feel indebted to the brave and kind-hearted Cornish miners, who were proceeding with you to prosecute their industrious calling in another hemisphere, for the very conspicuous and honourable part they bore on the calamitous occasion in question, and for the various important services they gratuitously rendered to us on our passage to Falmouth.

That yourself and our other benefactors belonging to the Cambria may be carried in safety to your distant destination, under the Divine protection; and that you may unceasingly enjoy a large measure of that consolation and gladness which you have been the means of imparting to others, is the sincere prayer of,

Sir,

Your most grateful Servants,

R. B. FEARON, Lt.-Col. 51st Foot.

H. COBB, Commander Hon. C. late ship Kent.

D. M'GREGOR, Major 51st Regt.

J. SEXTON, Chief Officer H. C. S. Kent.

C. FARRINGTON, Capt. 51st Regt.

E. W. BRAY, Capt. 51st Regt.

W. M. BOOTH, Lieut. 51st Regt.

D. PRINGLE, Private Passenger.

J. GRANT, Do.

H. SHUCKBURGH, Do.  
 J. HAY, 2d Officer H. C. late ship Kent.  
 R. M'INTOSH, Surgeon Do.  
 JN. CRAMMOND, Asst. Do. Do.  
 JOHN THOMSON, 4th Officer Do.  
 CHA. M'RAE, 5th Officer Do.  
 B. MUIR, 3d Officer Do.  
 — BIRCH, Private Passenger.  
 R. C. GHEEN, Capt. 31st Regt.  
 A. DOUGLASS, Lieut. 31st Regt.  
 J. SPENCE, Capt. Do.  
 RONALD CAMPBELL, Lieut. Do.  
 R. TOWNSEND, M. D. Private Passenger.  
 G. RUXTON, Lieut. 31st Regt.  
 J. W. WATERS, Quar. Master Do.  
 — HATCHETT, Private Passenger.  
 — SCRIVEN, H. C. late ship Kent.  
 H. EVANS, Ensign 31st Regt.  
 THOS. TAIT, Do. Do.  
 E. H. GENNYB, Lieut. Do.  
 CHAS. SHAW, Lieut. and Adj. Do.  
 E. S. GRAHAM, M. D. Asst. Surgeon Do.  
 A. SHAW, Ensign Do.  
 T. TIGHE, 6th Officer H. C. ship Kent.  
 ANTHY. TRAIL, Midshipman Do.  
 W. C. BROWN, Purser Do.  
 W. CORP, Midshipman Do.  
 R. ELTON, Do. Do.  
 GEO. BALDWIN, Lieut. 31st Regt.  
 RICH. MONK, Paymaster Do.  
 B. DODGIN, Lieut. Do.

*To Capt. W. Cook, commanding the Cambria  
 Brig, Falmouth Harbour.*

his sincere thanks for the services which you have rendered to the officers and soldiers of his Majesty's 31st regiment, and to their wives and children, upon this melancholy occasion.

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

(Signed) HERBERT TAYLOR.

*Captain Cook, ship Cambria.*

#### CAPTAIN COOK'S REPLY.

*Falmouth, March 11, 1826.*

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge your letter of the 8th inst. conveying to me the sentiments his Royal Highness the Commander-in-Chief has been pleased to entertain, in consequence of the services I have been enabled to render (by the interposition of a Divine Providence) to the sufferers on board the Honourable East India Company's ship *Kent*, at the period of her conflagration.

Permit me, Sir, most respectfully to state, that, next to the heartfelt satisfaction I experienced at having had the opportunity of being useful in the cause of humanity, I value the approbation his Royal Highness has done me the honour so graciously to express; and I beg leave to request, that you will have the kindness to tender to his Royal Highness my most humble, but very sincere thanks, for this distinguished mark of his condescension and goodness, rendered still more valuable to me in noticing those under my command, by whom I was so ably assisted.

With the greatest respect,

I have the honour to be,

SIR,

Your very obedient humble Servant,

(Signed) WM. COOK.

*To Sir Herbert Taylor, Bart, &c. &c.*

## LETTER FROM THE SECRETARY AT WAR.

*War-Office, March 30.*

SIR,

THE Secretary at war having taken into consideration the resolution passed at the Board of the Anglo-Mexican Association on the 8th inst. relative to the important services rendered by Captain Cook and the crew of the Cambria, to the Kent East Indiaman, whereby 557 persons were saved from the wreck of the latter vessel, I am directed to acquaint you, that his Lordship will authorise the sum of L.580 to be granted to the master, mates, and other persons on board the Cambria, in the under-mentioned proportions, Captain Cook stating to this office to whom he would wish the same to be issued.

I am, at the same time, to state, that Lord Palmerston feels the greatest satisfaction in offering to the Captain and his crew this acknowledgment, for their humane and meritorious exertions in rescuing so many persons from the fate, which, without the assistance of the Cambria, would have been inevitable.

To the quarter L.140, mate L.50, acting second mate L.30, crew, nine men, each L.10, L.90; miners, 25 men, each L.10, L.250; making in all L.580.

I am,

SIR,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

(Signed) W. MERRY.

FROM THE SECRETARY OF THE HON. EAST INDIA  
COMPANY TO THE AGENTS FOR THE SHIP CAM-  
BRIA.

*East India House, March 17, 1825.*

GENTLEMEN,

In reference to your communication of yesterday, I am in-  
structed to acquaint you, that the Court of Directors of the  
East India Company have resolved; that as agents to the  
owners of the ship Cambria, and to Captain Cook, you be paid  
the under-mentioned sums, in compensation for the losses and  
expenses occasioned to them by the assistance rendered to the  
passengers and ship's company of the *East-Indiaman*,  
viz.—

On account of the Captain—	
For payment of bill for provisions, &c.	L. 287. 11. 0
For diet, &c. of the passengers	297. 10. 0
On account of the owners—	
For demurrage, &c.	500. 0. 0

Warrants for the sums above mentioned are now payable to  
you at the treasury in this house; also, warrants for the fol-  
lowing sums, which the Court have resolved to present to  
Captain Cook, his officers, passengers, and crew, and regard-  
ing which a communication has been this day addressed to  
Captain Cook, viz.

To Captain Cook	L. 600
To his first mate	100
To the carpenter, acting as second mate	50
To the crew (nine persons) each L. 10	90
To the miners (26 persons) each L. 15	390

The Court have also authorised their agent at Falmouth to  
present the ten persons proceeding in the capacity of miners

of a superior class with such cabin stores as may contribute to their comfort and convenience during their intended voyage, to the extent of £100. I am,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

(Signed) J. DART, Secretary.

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The Royal Exchange Assurance have also paid to Messrs. Dobson and Baker £50 as a present to Captain Cook, and £50 to be divided among his officers and crew.

The Royal Humane Society have awarded to Captain Cook an Honorary Medallion.

The Subscribers to Lloyd's voted the sum of £100 to Capt. Cook for saving the lives of the officers and soldiers of the 31st Regiment, and the crew of the Kent East Indiaman.

The Underwriters at Liverpool have also shown their accustomed liberality on this occasion.

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LETTER TO THE COMMITTEE OF THE INHABITANTS  
OF FALMOUTH.

*Falmouth, March 16, 1825.*

GENTLEMEN,

In tracing the various links in that ample chain of mercy and bounty with which it has pleased a gracious Providence to surround the numerous individuals lately rescued from the destruction of the Honourable Company's ship Kent, we, the Lieutenant-Colonel commanding, and Officers belonging to the Right Wing of the 31st Regiment, cannot but reflect with unceasing gratitude on the beneficence of that arrangement, whereby ourselves and our gallant men, after the awful and



afflicting calamity that befel us, were cast upon the sympathies of the inhabitants of Falmouth and the adjacent towns, who have so widely opened their hearts to feel, and munificently extended their hands to provide for our numerous and pressing wants.

We were thrown upon your shore as penniless strangers, and ye took us in ;—we were hungry, and ye gave us meat ;—naked, and ye clothed us ;—sick, and ye relieved and comforted us. We have found you rejoicing with those of us who rejoiced, and weeping with such of us as had cause to weep. You have visited our fatherless and widows in their affliction, and sought by unceasing acts of the most reasonable, effective, and delicate charity, to alleviate the measure of our sufferings.

Under such circumstances, what can we say, or where shall we find words to express our emotions ? You have created between us and our beloved country an additional bond of affection and gratitude, that will animate our future zeal, and enable us, amidst all the vicissitudes of our professional life, to point out Falmouth to our companions in arms, as one of the bright spots in our happy land, where the friendless shall find many friends, and the afflicted receive abundant consolation.

In the name and on behalf of the Officers of the Right Wing of the 31st Regiment,

R. B. FEARON, Lieut.-Col. 31st Foot.

*To the Chairman and Members of the  
Committee for the relief of the sufferers  
by the destruction of the Honourable  
Company's ship Kent, &c. &c. Falmouth,*



THE END.

